

VIETNAMESE AFFAIRS STAFF

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF SPECIAL INTELLIGENCE
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DATE: 29 Sept 1973

TO: Mr. Thuermer

FROM: George A. Carver, Jr.

SUBJECT: National Geographic Article

REMARKS:

25X1 1. Appended to this note is the package from the National Geographic. My associates have reviewed it along with our colleagues in EA [] Ted Shackley has also given it his personal scrutiny. Also attached is a consolidated list of suggestions and corrections done up as a blind memo so you can pass it as is to the National Geographic.

2. In returning this material, please thank the Geographic warmly for their courtesy in letting us have a look at Mr. Garrett's text. If the Geographic has any questions about any of our suggestions, please have their Research Staff get in touch with me.

25X1 []
George A. Carver, Jr.

Special Assistant for Vietnamese Affairs

Attachments

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1 October 1973

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Requested Comments on Mr. Garrett's Article
"The Meo of Laos: Nowhere to Run"

- Page 2, line 20: The figure of \$5,000 per capita is grossly exaggerated -- \$500 per capita is more realistic, but probably still is excessive. The use of any such figure is misleading unless it can be explained just how it is arrived at. The best course seems to be to delete.
- Page 5, line 4: We know of no instances of Meo dying from hunger. Many of the Meo who died, died as a result of combat against North Vietnamese regular forces.
- line 6: The 300,000 refugee figure is not limited to Meo but includes Lao and other refugees as well. The population figure of 250,000 is at best a guess. There are no accurate figures as to the total number of Meo in Xieng Khouang Province.
- Page 6, line 12: We do not believe that Vang Pao considers his army to be totally defeated. The military concept of operations called for irregular warfare of position and maneuver with the holding of only limited key positions. He has been successful in accomplishing his military objectives despite overwhelming odds and can in no way be considered totally defeated.
- Page 17: There is no reliable evidence to support claim that he was captured by the Pathet Lao. Suggest lines 16-27 be deleted. STAT
- Page 24: The runway at Long Tieng is 4,420 feet long -- not 3,000.

Muong (not "Hmong") have participated (indirectly and in coordination) with Air America in pilot rescue/body recovery missions in Laos; however, we are not aware of any recovery operations by the Muong in North Vietnam. Also, suggest change the Muong spelling throughout the text.

Page 26:

We question the accuracy of the statement about Vang Pao trying to proclaim a Muong state in 1966. Suggest this sentence be deleted.

Page 28:

It is misleading to speak of Nam Phet sitting in "one-third of the Golden Triangle," although a part of Laos is one of the three nations whose parts comprise the Triangle. In actual area, however, a comparatively small portion of the opium growing area is located in Laos. The largest area is in Burma, which produces the most opium, and the next largest is Thailand, which produces about twice as much opium as Laos (or did, when Laos was producing 100 tons). The Golden Triangle is not equilateral and Laos does not constitute one-third of it. Suggest minor rephrasing of lines 8-11.

Page 29:

We have not heard of the defoliation (implied) incident, and as far as we know, no such incident has occurred.

There is no quarrel with the figures cited, however, the fact is that a kilo of opium which a Muong sold for \$24 is most unlikely to wind up on the streets of New York. Most of the opium grown in Laos is consumed in Laos. Of the approximately 700 tons of opium produced in the Golden triangle, perhaps 600 tons were used in Southeast Asia. Of that opium from the Golden Triangle that eventually reaches the United States as Number Four heroin, most was undoubtedly grown in Burma. Similarly, we have no reason to believe that the heroin which was available to GIs in Vietnam was grown in Laos, or that it was controlled by "Lao officials." This heroin, too, probably originated in Burma, but may well have transited Laos enroute to Vietnam. Suggest

deletion of entire portion beginning with line 10 on Page 29 and through line 2 on Page 31.

Page 31:

We know of no offer by the Lao Government for preemptive buying of the opium crop at \$24 per kilogram. That price is indeed lower than the current going rate, which varies from about \$27, in one of the growing areas, to \$125 in Vientiane. There are, of course, many prices in between, depending on the particular area. Suggest deletion of sentence beginning on line 7 with phrase "This year ..."

Page 33:

did in fact lose a leg^{STAT} while flying over the Chinese road, but he is now equipped with an artificial leg and is now back on flight status with FAA approval. Suggest appropriate changes.

Page 35:

Line 14 should probably be changed to "dengue" fever.